

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:**

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

~~The invention relates to data~~ Data networks, ~~[[to]]~~ nodes making up parts of data networks, and ~~[[to]]~~ information ~~relating~~ are related to the ~~characterisation~~ characterization of paths taken by data travelling between nodes in the networks. Path ~~characterisation~~ characterization information is arranged to be conveyed to nodes such that it may be used by nodes subsequently forwarding data. In particular, the invention relates to nodes receiving such path ~~characterisation~~ characterization information from upstream nodes, deriving therefrom information indicative of characteristics of a path downstream of said nodes, and using such information to make informed decisions such as routing decisions when forwarding data onward in data networks.